

**In support of the Medicaid program and the Governor's recommendations**

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee, I am Joan Taylor. I represent Children's Disability Services, five community based programs that provide services in every county in Montana. Members include: DEAP in Miles City, Hi-Line Home Programs in Glasgow, Step in Billings, Quality Life Concepts in Bozeman, Family Outreach in Helena and CDC in Missoula. These regional service providers offer a wide-range of Medicaid funded services to children and their families across the State of Montana.

I appear before you today in support of the Medicaid budget recommended by the Governor.

Over 318 Montana children are receiving intensive services through the Medicaid waivers including the Children's Waiver Service, (CWS) and the Children's Autism Waiver, (CAW).

Without these Medicaid services, many of these children would be in more restrictive and costly placements. Some children currently in foster care receiving these Medicaid services came from out of state institutions or group homes. Children receiving services make huge gains and many in the autism waiver will not be eligible for services after the three year intervention.

Without the help of Medicaid and Medicaid waiver services, few Montana families would have the economic resources to meet the needs of their child or children with disabilities. Even with insurance, the co-pay and deductible costs can bankrupt families. It is not unusual for families with total insurance capped amounts to have their child reach limits before they are teenagers, leaving the child without the resources necessary to meet medical needs.

The impact of Medicaid services for children with disabilities is immeasurable and prevents much more costly and restrictive alternatives.

These are the Medicaid facts, Mr. Chairman. Now, I would like to introduce Julie Van Vlieg and she will tell you her personal story about what a difference Medicaid funded services meant to her child and her family. Thank you.